



Mount Rainier National Park

Paradise Construction Update

No. 2 – June 2006



Artist rendering of the new visitor center



Mount Rainier National Park is planning two simultaneous construction projects at Paradise beginning this year and continuing through 2009. The two projects and associated work include rehabilitation of the historic Paradise Inn, construction of a new visitor center, and redesign of the parking lots. After the opening of the new visitor center, the current visitor center will be demolished.

Contract Awarded for Construction Projects

On May 25th the park awarded a \$34,700,000 contract to the Joint Venture of Miller/Watts and John Korsmo Construction to rehabilitate both the Paradise Inn and construct the new visitor center at Paradise.

Due to a volatile construction market, the contractor bids received at the end of March exceeded the available line item construction funds by several million dollars. Negotiations along with identifying ways to reduce costs and the project scope were initiated to bring the project within available funds. Additional funding was also identified to make up the remaining shortfall.

Construction and archeological testing started early in June. The upper parking lot at Paradise is closed to visitor use. For the month of June parking is available in the lower lot adjacent to the current visitor center and down the Paradise Valley Road.

The design of the new visitor center resembles the rustic architectural style of the Paradise Inn and the Guide House, including a steep roof to shed snow.

In two short years we will have a new visitor center and a rehabilitated National Historic Landmark building. We ask for your patience while visiting Paradise during construction.

Paradise Inn
ca. 1939





Visiting Paradise This Summer

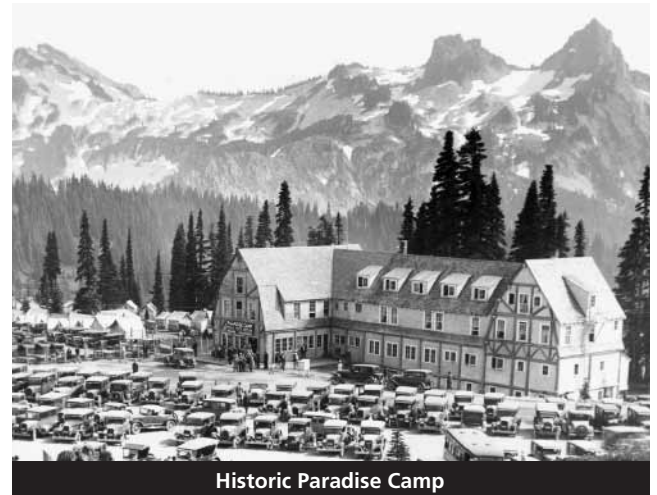
Paradise trails and the Paradise Jackson Visitor Center remain open to visitors during construction of the new visitor center and rehabilitation of the Paradise Inn. Currently all trails are covered with 100 inches of snow. The meadows are expected to meltout sometime in July.

All traditional services and activities are available at Paradise with the exception of lodging during the complete closure of Paradise Inn and construction of the new visitor center. All normal activities and guest services remain available in all other areas of the park. A variety of overnight accommodations, restaurants, and guest services are also available at the National Park Inn at Longmire and in nearby communities.

Expect significantly reduced levels of parking during construction. The park is working to implement a shuttle system to service outlying parking areas within the next several weeks.

To avoid parking congestion consider visiting Paradise on weekdays, early mornings, late afternoons, or schedule excursions to other areas of the park, take an alternate route, and experience the sights and activities of gateway communities during peak hours and weekends.

Historic Paradise Camp: An Archeological Exploration



Historic Paradise Camp

Archeologists are testing the site where the new visitor center will be built to determine if structural components, such as foundation or wall elements of the historic Paradise Camp are intact under the asphalt. This will provide the exact location of the structure. Testing of the ground layers will also determine if there is presence of material related to Native American use of the area.

The Paradise Camp is where campers enjoyed staying in soft-sided tents with the main building used for food services, supplies, and even overnight accommodations in later years.

The visitor center will be constructed over part of the former Paradise Camp, to reclaim the original historic layout of the Paradise area.

Mount Rainier
and
Paradise Inn
ca. 1923



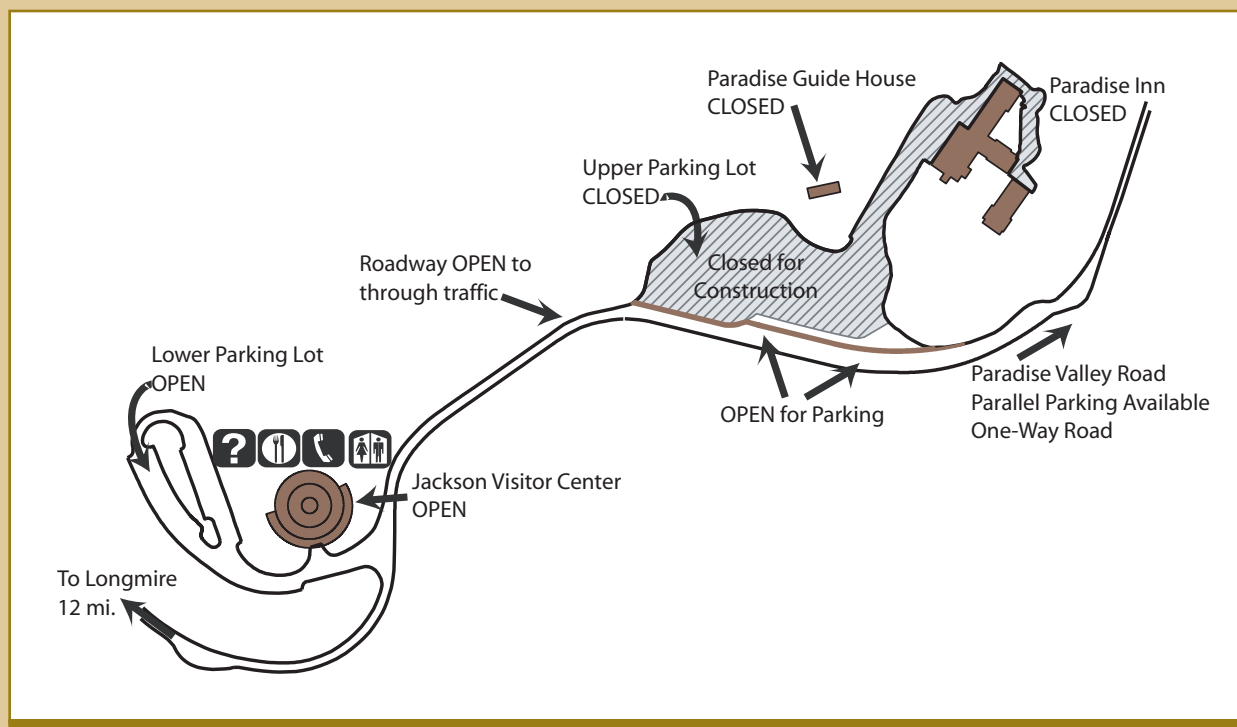
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Construction Milestones

Contract Award	May 25, 2006
Begin Archeological Testing	May 31, 2006
Notice to Proceed	June 5, 2006
Begin On-Site Mobilization	June 5, 2006
Begin Work on Paradise Inn	June 6, 2006
Begin Visitor Center Excavation	June 19, 2006
Complete Paradise Inn	April 1, 2008
Complete Visitor Center Construction	August 1, 2008
Complete Installation of Exhibits	September 1, 2008
Demolish existing JVC	Fall 2008 or Spring/Summer 2009
Rehab Lower Parking Lot	Summer 2009



Where to Park While Visiting Paradise

Construction efforts have significantly reduced parking in the immediate Paradise area.

Be prepared to park along the Paradise Valley Road and walk back up to Paradise. Visitor drop off is available in the lower parking lot. The park is working to implement a shuttle system later this month and in July more parking will become available

Due to the construction projects parking will be congested and the area could be noisier than usual. For an enjoyable visit please consider the following information prior to driving to Paradise:

- The best time to visit Paradise is on weekdays, early or late in the day.
- If visiting on a weekend or holiday plan to arrive at Paradise by 9:00 a.m. or after 5:00 p.m. for the best parking opportunities.
- Consider exploring other areas of the park or outside of the park during construction.

Thank you for your patience during construction.

Parking and Facility Status

- Parking is available in the lower lot and along the Paradise Valley Road.
- The upper parking lot is closed.
- The Jackson Visitor Center is open.
- RVs and large vehicles park on the Paradise Valley Road.
- Paradise Inn and the Guide House are closed.
- Obtain climbing permits at the Jackson Visitor Center.
- Buses drop off passengers at the visitor center and park on the Paradise Valley Road.

Protecting Paradise

Help limit impacts and protect vegetation by parking only in designated parking spots, and walking and hiking on roads and trails.



Construction Zone!

Ensure a safe visit by following traffic and pedestrian signs, using patience while driving in the heavily congested area, watching for children and pedestrians, and by staying out of construction zones.

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Activities Outside of the Paradise Area

Nisqually Entrance to Stevens Canyon

Picnicking

- Sunshine Point Campground
- Kautz Creek Viewpoint
- Narada Falls
- Longmire
- Cougar Rock

Hiking

- Twin Firs Trail
- Trail of the Shadows
- Rampart Ridge
- Eagle Peak
- Carter Falls

Stevens Canyon to Ohanapecosh

Picnicking

- Box Canyon
- Ohanapecosh Campground
- Backbone Ridge

Hiking

- Grove of the Patriarchs
- Silver Falls

Why Build a New Visitor Center?

Basic problems with the existing Jackson Visitor Center's design make it inefficient and difficult to maintain, incompatible with the rustic character of Paradise, and inconsistent with modern building codes. For these reasons, a new visitor center will be built to take its place. The roof was not built to withstand the fifteen to twenty feet of snow that bury everything in a typical winter. Consequently, an elaborate snow-melt system had to be installed in the roof to keep it clear. During the winter months it takes between 300 and 500 gallons of diesel fuel *per day* to heat the building and melt the snow off the roof. Repair of the snow-melt system, embedded in the roof, would require replacement of the roof which would be cost prohibitive. The snowmelt system risks the safety of park staff when they are required to manually remove snow from the roof. If the roof heating system failed, the existing visitor center could collapse under the snow load.

Paradise is part of a designated National Historic Landmark District, with historic architecture that fits the natural setting. The modernistic design of the Jackson Visitor Center is incompatible with other, more traditional, structures around it. It also no longer meets current building codes or accessibility guidelines. Its ramps are too steep, and there is no elevator.

Although the new visitor center will be smaller, it will serve visitors better. It will be a model of energy efficiency and new exhibits will interpret the natural features and cultural significance of Mount Rainier. A classic design and careful landscaping will blend the building into the natural and historic landscape, while plenty of windows will permit panoramic views of Mount Rainier and the Tatoosh Range.

Rehabilitation of the Paradise Inn



The Paradise Inn is the largest lodging facility located within Mount Rainier National Park. The Inn was built using massive timbers and glacial boulders to blend the building with its natural surroundings and, therefore, the building is a contributing feature to the park's National Historic Landmark District designation.

The Paradise Inn was constructed in 1916 and is at increasing risk of structural failure due to the damage caused by heavy exterior snow loading. The Inn fails to meet current best professional structural standards and codes and, therefore, poses a potential risk to human health and safety in the event of a major earthquake. A structural viability assessment of the Inn in 1996 estimated that a catastrophic failure of the entire structure was possible within the next ten years. In addition, the Inn is not accessible for individuals with mobility impairments, nor does it contain guest rooms that are compliant with the Americans with Disability Act. The grand hearths and their chimneys are also at risk of collapse in the Main Lobby and Dining Hall.

The rehabilitation will correct these deficiencies, resulting in a structure that is safe, stable, and serves visitors better.